



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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PSSB Weekly Highlights

- Work is taking place at Ft. Harrison to ensure that all needed T-1s are up and running in preparation for the upgrade to the Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) dispatch center, which is scheduled for the middle of August.
- MT Dept. of Transportation technicians were at Highwood Baldy this week to repair damage to an ice bridge.
- Here it is, late July, and there is still too much snow at the Big Mountain site to gain access to it!

PSSB Welcomes Dept. of Commerce Broadband Program Group

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Montana Broadband Program is being funded through the State Broadband Data and Development (SBDD) program that is being administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The goal of these programs is to facilitate the integration of broadband and information technology into state and local economies. Economic development, public safety, energy efficiency, and advances in education and health care rely not only on broadband infrastructure, but also on the knowledge and tools to leverage that infrastructure.

Effective July 2011, the Montana Broadband Program was transferred to the Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB) in the Department of Administration's State Information Technology Services Division (SITSD). This move will better align the program's overall goals and objectives with other State information technology related programs.

PSSB is pleased to welcome Program Manager Chad Hultin and Administrative Specialist Trudy Skari to the department.

To learn more about the Broadband Program, visit: www.mtbroadband.org.

Montana APCO Chapter Wins Density Award

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Kimberly Burdick, Communications Manager with the Chouteau County Sheriff's Office, recently notified Montana members of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials – International (APCO) that the Montana Chapter had won the 2011 Membership Density Award. This award is based on the percentage of APCO members as compared with the state's population.



APCO International is the world's largest organization of public safety communications professionals. It serves the needs of public safety communications practitioners worldwide by providing professional development, technical assistance, advocacy and outreach. Organized by region, APCO has 49 chapters and affiliates across the United States, Britain, Australasia (a region that includes Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea, and some South Pacific islands) and Canada. Here is a link to the APCO website: <http://www.apcointl.org/>.

By joining APCO, you automatically become a member of a local chapter. APCO chapters are very active, often hosting local meetings, regional conferences and training sessions. Local chapters provide invaluable resources and networking opportunities. If you haven't done so already, be sure to mark your calendar for Montana's annual APCO conference, which will take place in Kalispell the week of Oct. 11. For more information about the Montana Chapter, visit: <http://www.mtapco.org/>.

Each July, Chapter Membership Awards are calculated according to APCO's Policy Manual. The State of Texas won the Chapter Growth Award that is based on membership numbers and Arkansas won the Chapter Growth Award that is based on a percentage increase. Kimberly Burdick also serves as the APCO National Executive Council Representative for Montana, and she thanked members for making the award possible.

NPSTC Urges House to Make Public Safety a Priority

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In a July 18 press release, the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC) urged the House to make public safety a priority by reallocating the D block and providing funding for a broadband network as proposed in Senate Bill S.911.



Republicans on the House Energy and Commerce Committee released staff discussion draft legislation that was discussed at the House Communications and Technology Subcommittee hearing July 15 on spectrum legislation. The draft, titled the Spectrum Innovation Act of 2011, has a number of controversial provisions, including imposing a ban on the future use of public safety spectrum for narrowband communications. It would require the D block to be re-auctioned, but doesn't include any specific funding for the construction of a public safety broadband network, and would authorize the FCC to hold incentive auctions.

On Mon., July 17, Reps. Henry A. Waxman (D., Calif.) and Anna G. Eshoo (D., Calif.), issued their own staff discussion draft of the Public Safety Broadband and Wireless Innovation Act of 2011 that would reallocate the D Block to public safety, authorize more than \$11 billion to construct a nationwide public safety broadband network, and permit the FCC to hold incentive auctions.

The Congresspersons are distributing their draft today to enhance committee consideration of these issues and clarify how they would approach legislating in this area. Both members have instructed committee staff to continue bipartisan dialogue with the majority and strongly prefer a consensus approach.

The GOP draft proposes to auction the D Block, use the 24 MHz of public safety 700 MHz band spectrum (12 MHz of broadband and 12 MHz of narrowband voice) for the nationwide broadband network, and would direct the FCC to license the spectrum to the 50 states instead of having a single nationwide license.

It would freeze expansion of narrowband voice services in the 700 MHz spectrum to facilitate transition to broadband. The Commission would not

be allowed to "permit the public safety spectrum to be used by a narrowband land mobile radio system unless such system was purchased before Sept. 1, 2011," the draft states. It neglects to acknowledge that there are no current or planned broadband technologies that will replace public safety land mobile narrowband voice systems and provide public safety with mission-critical capabilities that allow unit-to-unit talk around when responders cannot access a network like that which is contemplated for broadband. Without access to a network, first responders will have no communications.

On Mon., July 12, Reps. John D. Dingell (D., Mich.) and Gene Green (D., Texas), House Energy and Commerce Committee, introduced a companion bill, H.R.2482, to S.911, which would reallocate the D Block to public safety, authorize \$12 billion to construct a nationwide public safety broadband network, and provide the FCC with incentive auction authority.

National Governors Association Backs D Block Reallocation

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

In a related story, which may be accessed at <http://thehill.com/blogs/hillicon-valley/technology/170973-national-governors-association-backs-d-block-reallocation>, your editor learned that the National Governors Association wrote to the leadership of both the House and Senate on Fri., July 8 expressing its support for reallocating the D Block of spectrum to public safety.

The HAM will keep you posted on upcoming events and the impact this legislation might have on Montana.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Tues., July 26**
State Agency Radio Users Task Force
Helena • 9:30-11:00 am
Mitchell Building, 125 S. Roberts, Rm. 223
- **Thurs., July 28**
Big Sky 11 Consortium
Billings • 10:00 am - noon
Yellowstone Co. EOC/Fire Station
2305 8th Ave. N.
- **Thurs., Aug. 4**
Northern Tier Consortium
Havre • 11:00 am - 1:30 pm
Hill County Detention Center Courtroom Mtg. Area
1450 2nd St. West